

The oboe in the Venetian Republic, 1692-1797

The history of woodwind instruments in Italy in the 18th century has received little attention. The remarkable supremacy of Italian string playing and making, as well as the common preconception that the playing of woodwinds was more typical of France and Germany, has fuelled this neglect. A number of criticisms made in the period in question have also helped to encourage the idea that the Italians had no aptitude for the woodwinds. In his satirical treatise *Il teatro alla moda* (c.1720), Benedetto Marcello wrote:¹

Oboè, flauti, trombe, fagotti, etc., saranno scordati, cresceranno, etc.

Oboes, flutes, trumpets, bassoons, etc., will always be out of tune, too sharp, etc.

Alessandro Scarlatti was reported in Quantz's autobiography to have said to his pupil J. A. Hasse in 1725:²

Mein Sohn... ihr wisset, dass ich die blasenden Instrumentisten nicht leiden kann: denn sie blasen alle falsch.

My son... you know that I cannot suffer the wind instrumentalists: it is because they all play out of tune.

Quantz himself wrote later:³

On se plaint dans quelque parties d'Italie au ton haut... Car les instruments à vent sont dans ce pays plus rarement employés que dans d'autres, & le gout qu'on en a n'est par consequent pas si bon que celui qu'on a pour d'autres choses dans la Musique... Un ton plus haut feroit, que quoique la Figure des instruments restât, la Flute traversière deviendrait de nouveau une Flute de travers allemande, l'Hautbois une Chalemie, le Violon un Violino Piccolo et le Basson un Bombardo.

In some parts of Italy they prefer the heightening of the pitch... For there the wind instruments are less used than in other countries, and in consequence the inhabitants do not have such good taste with regard to these instruments as they have for other things in music... Although the shape of the instrument would remain, the very high pitch would finally make a cross-pipe again of the transverse flute, a shawm of the oboe, a violino piccolo of the violin, and a bombard of the bassoon.

Yet there is enough evidence available for us to be able to conclude that these statements by Marcello, Scarlatti and Quantz are the results of particular situations and tastes.

It is commonly accepted that woodwind instruments of the late Baroque period were developed in the 1650s by French families of players, composers and makers such as the Hotteterres and the Philidors. These instruments, namely the Baroque recorder, transverse flute, oboe and bassoon, were actually introduced into the musical life of almost every part of Italy by 1700. Shortly after this date, Italian woodwind players became famous all over Europe and were considered to be among the best of the age. By the beginning of the 18th century the repertory of pieces produced in Italy for these instruments included a number of incomparable masterpieces.

Around 1700 the oboe took the place of primary importance among woodwind instruments in professional music playing. Its history in Italy in the 18th century is especially significant and can largely be documented. Although recent studies have rediscovered such remarkable oboist-composers as Giuseppe Sammartini (1695-1750)⁴ and Alessandro Besozzi (1702-1793),⁵ information about other important Italian personalities in the history of the oboe is often scarce or ambiguous.

This study will attempt to contribute to the subject, choosing as its geographical limits the Venetian Republic, a state that, after more than ten centuries of flourishing political, social and cultural existence, in 1797 finally succumbed to the pressures of the Austrian and Napoleonic armies. Besides the flourishing commercial and cultural centre of the city of Venice itself, the republic included the major towns of Padua, Verona, Vicenza, Udine, Treviso, Brescia and Bergamo. Although the musical connection between all these centres is not always evident, it will be seen that many are relevant to our subject, either as important centres for the oboe or as the native towns of eminent oboists. Within these limits this study will pay attention to the origins of the oboe, its role in musical life, its repertory and its most important performers, and will make some organological comments about the instrument.

Origins and role of the oboe in the Venetian Republic

The earliest mention of the oboe in Venice is to be



1 'Excellent oboe player who performed at the Valle theatre [Rome] in carnival 1751 and at my accademia. He is named Giuseppe and he is Venetian.' Caricature by Pier Leone Ghezzi (Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale dei disegni e delle stampe, vol.2606, F.N. 4659)

found in the scores of the operas *Onorio in Roma* by Carlo Francesco Pollarolo and *Furio Camillo* by Giacomo Perti, both performed there in 1692.⁶ The introduction of the oboe into the orchestra of the chapel of San Marco on 19 January 1698 marked the official admission of the instrument into Venetian musical life.⁷

In contrast to what happened in most other places in Europe, the oboe was not introduced to Venice by way of popular or military-band playing. After its first mention the oboe appears already well established in the cultured ambience of Venetian opera and chapel. No mention of oboes defined as such can be found in the Venetian bands of *piffari*, which included such wind instruments as trumpets, cornetts and drums, and which were in decline at the beginning of the 18th century.⁸ One can believe therefore that the earliest players employed came from abroad and had learnt their art before coming to Venice. This conjecture is supported by the foreign names of several of the earliest oboists. Of these, Ludwig Erdmann was certainly German, Ignazio Siber probably was too, and Ignazio Rion might have been of French origin (see their biographies below).

Antonio Vivaldi wrote for all the late Baroque woodwinds (including the clarinet, not a typically French instrument) that were built by his contemporary, the maker Johann Christoph Denner (1655–1707) of Nuremberg. This, together with the intense level of commercial exchange between Venice and Germany, lends support to the theory that woodwinds were introduced to Venice from Germany. However, there are also connections in this regard between Venice and Milan: these will be discussed later.

In the chapel of San Marco, the most significant centre of Venetian professional music, the oboe became a stable element of the orchestra shortly before the cornett left it.⁹ This is symptomatic of a general change in musical taste that could be characterized as the passage from the early to the late Baroque period. In the latter, the Venetian oboe had inherited the role previously assumed by the cornett. The chapel of San Marco included only one oboe until about 1762. The arrival of Baldassare Galuppi as *maestro di cappella* marked an important reform in the orchestra and an increase in its staff. On 28 February 1766 the two oboists Giovanni Brizzio and Marco Perosa were dismissed¹⁰ and four players were placed in charge of the section of 'oboè e flauti'.¹¹ It is not certain whether they were all able to perform on both

oboe and flute (something that was very common in the first half of the century, and to a lesser extent later), or whether two specialized in one instrument and two in the other. Among the four named—Piero Fruttel (called 'Chevalier', or 'Sevalié') Domenico Scolari, Piero Giaffoni and Fioravante Agostinelli—only the first two are mentioned in the documents as oboists. Fioravante Agostinelli (1741–1809) soon moved to Germany where he became a famous flautist.¹² In addition, among the four players appointed to occupy the same positions at the end of the republic, Giovanni Battista Delai (see below for his biography) was known only as a famous oboist, and Luigi Gianella (1778–1817) as a distinguished flautist and composer for the flute.¹³ However, the registration of engagement of Delai, dated 10 November 1789, records:¹⁴

In luogo del defonto suonator d'oboè e flauto Piero Fruttel detto Chevalier assunto al servizio della cappella di S. Marco li 20 febraia 1765 [= 1766] eletto Gio. Battista Delai.

Instead of the deceased oboe and flute player Piero Fruttel named Chevalier, appointed at the service of the *cappella* of San Marco on 20 February 1766, Gio. Battista Delai is elected.

Stable places for oboe teaching in Venice were established very early in the century, namely in three of the *ospedali*, which provided for the education of orphan or poor girls, but later also for the daughters of aristocratic families.

The Ospedale della Pietà, famous for its violin teacher Antonio Vivaldi, decided to take on an oboe teacher on 12 August 1703, probably on the insistence of Francesco Gasparini, who was *maestro di coro* there from 7 June 1701.¹⁵ All the major Venetian oboists of the time taught at the Pietà in turn: Ignazio Rion, March 1704–1705; Onofrio Penati, May 1704–February 1706; Ludwig Erdmann, 7 March 1707–1708; Ignazio Siber, 11 June 1713–28 May 1716; Penati again, until 1722.¹⁶ No more oboe tuition was provided at the Pietà after 1722. Siber reappeared on 17 December 1728 as a teacher of the transverse flute; he held this position until his retirement on 23 September 1757.¹⁷

Pelegina dall'Oboè, named—as was customary for these orphan girls—after the instrument she played, was one of the most gifted pupils of the Pietà, who were allowed to have private students from 5 June 1707.¹⁸ In 1726 a certain Susanna was recorded as most gifted oboist at the Pietà.¹⁹

The Ospedale dei Mendicanti had provided oboe teaching before 1700. In that year, in fact, the

excellence of the oboe playing of a girl named Barbara from that institution was remarked on.²⁰ Oboe teaching was provided from 1713 or shortly before at the Ospedali dei Derelitti. From 1718 one of the girls named Anna was entrusted with teaching the instrument.²¹

Beside these stable positions, occasional engagements in minor churches, academies, private palaces and opera performances were quite important for the oboists' subsistence. One unspecified oboist, for example, is listed among a small ensemble that provided the music at San Giacomo di Rialto on Christmas Eve and at the mass on Christmas Day, probably in the later part of the 18th century.²² In 1780 and 1781 the playbills of operas performed at the San Samuele Theatre included unusually the principal oboist Giuseppe Ferlendis beside the singers.²³

Venetian players were often invited to perform in the neighbouring towns, which at the beginning of the century were particularly dependent on their services. At the chapel of San Antonio, a major centre of professional music in Padua, the oboist 'Onofrio da Venezia' (very likely Penati) was invited to perform at the major feasts from 1705 to 1721.²⁴ A local player, Luca Zabile (or Zabilli etc.), employed from 29 December 1701 as violinist, was also required to perform on the oboe at the major feasts until his death in 1761.²⁵ Other minor oboists were requested from time to time to perform for the same occasions.²⁶ Eventually a stable place for an oboist was set up at the San Antonio chapel: Matteo Bissoli (see below) was elected unanimously on 28 December 1736.²⁷ A place for a second oboe was established only in 1791.²⁸

In Vicenza, the local oboist Domenico De Marchi performed beside such famous players as Antonio Vivaldi at a Baroque feast on 18 June 1713.²⁹

In Brescia an unspecified oboist was already employed in 1703, performing for a feast at the church of San Nazaro.³⁰ In 1731 Matteo Bissoli, who was born in that town, performed at the church of Santa Maria della Pace; the second oboe was 'Signor Luca' (possibly Luca Zabile).³¹ Playbills of operas performed at the theatre twice included the names of the principal oboists: Pietro Ferlendis in 1789, and his brother Giuseppe (also listed as a performer on the english horn) in 1791.³²

In other minor places of the republic, the oboe entered the official musical life only in the later part of the century. The cathedral in Udine, for example, engaged stable oboists (and bassoonists) only in 1785.³³



*Un castrato tedesco restaurato di musica
il Boe e oboe e altri istromenti del Teatro
fatto di lui ed. Felli e l. r. 1720.*

2 'A German castrato who played at the beginning the oboe and all other wind instruments, drawn by me, Cav. [Pier Leone] Ghezzi, on 8 October 1720.' (I-Rvat, Cod. Ottob. Latino 3113, p.40)

Except for the above-mentioned activities at the *ospedali* in Venice, very little is known about oboe teaching in the republic, and about possible different schools. It is very likely that all major performers had private pupils. For example, in a letter from Giuseppe Tartini to Padre Martini dated 23 June 1752 we learn that:³⁴

... in stanza del nostro I. re Mo Vallotti si è fatta la prova del terzo suono con due oboè suonati, uno dal nostro famoso Sig. r Bissoli e l'altro da un di lui scolaro.

... at the presence of our renowned master Vallotti, the test of the third sound has been done, with two oboes, one played by our famous Signor Bissoli and the other by a pupil of his.

One should not be surprised by the lack of pedagogic writings for the oboe in this region and in

other parts of Italy. The instrument was in fact not successful enough in amateur circles to justify publications of instruction for it. However, around 1770 a treatise by a certain Vincenzo Paneraj from Florence, including instruction for the harpsichord, violin, viola, cello, double bass, oboe and flute, was published in Venice by Antonio Zatta. The very small amount of information given, consisting mostly of one fingering chart, is far too scanty to be a satisfactory method for any of these instruments.³⁵

The only existing evidence on amateur oboe playing in Venice, is given by Francesco Caffi, who at the beginning of the 19th century referred to oboists like Angelo Gaspari and Lovisello as 'insuperable, although they toiled only for the honour of the applause'.³⁶

Repertoire

The large amount of Venetian instrumental chamber music involving obbligato oboe that survives from the first 20 years of the 18th century is rather surprising, when it is compared with what is left from other Italian musical centres. This is probably because the material has been carefully preserved. One can hardly believe, in fact, that such famous oboist-composers as Alessandro Besozzi (1702–1793) from Turin or Matteo Bissoli from Padua wrote only the few pieces in existence today for their own instruments.³⁷

A cause of the poor preservation of music with obbligato oboe can be found in the lack of interest from publishers of the time in printing it. As the oboe has never been very popular in the amateur musical world, manuscripts of minor composers are easily lost.

However, a remarkable amount of solo oboe concertos by Venetian composers was published in the 18th century: these include Tomaso Albinoni's opp.7 and 9, Antonio Vivaldi's opp.7 and 8, and Alessandro Marcello's concerto in D minor.³⁸ Albinoni's eight concertos in his op.7 were probably the earliest published set of concertos for one or two oboes with orchestra, dating from 1715.³⁹ All the other concertos mentioned above were printed by the same publishers, Roger & Le Cène before 1725. These works probably played an important part in instigating the production of the oboe concerto in Europe as a whole, and the genre soon occupied a prominent position in the repertoire of the instrument.

Some soloistic pieces for woodwinds had begun to be included in the operatic music of the last decade of the 17th century. The opera in fact introduced all

those innovations that became customary in the instrumental repertoire some 20 years later.⁴⁰ Sacred music also employed an obbligato oboe from a very early stage, as proved by a *Confitebor* for alto, oboe, two violins and continuo written by Antonio Caldara around 1698, probably with Penati in mind.⁴¹

Among the earliest chamber instrumental pieces involving a solo oboe, Vivaldi's first concertos date from the period 1709–12. He produced oboe concertos again in his post-Mantua period (1720–23), and later, in the 1730s, those derived from bassoon concertos.⁴² Twenty-two of Vivaldi's oboe concertos are still in existence: this number includes some that are incomplete and a few doubtful ones (such as some in op.7, which is rather hybrid in style).⁴³

Beside the concertos for oboe and orchestra, Vivaldi's output includes many other chamber pieces involving a solo oboe part. It is unnecessary to enumerate here all compositions for oboe by Vivaldi or any other composer as this has been successfully done in a recent publication.⁴⁴ It should be pointed out, however, that Vivaldi wrote not fewer than ten concertos for the chamber instrumentation of recorder or flute, oboe, violin, bassoon and continuo: these pieces are especially rich in timbre, considering that relatively few instruments are involved. The sonata in C minor for oboe and continuo (rv53) is one of the most remarkable of its genre. Thematic similarities with the sinfonia of the opera *L'incoronazione di Dario* suggest a date of 1716; it was probably written for the Dresden virtuoso Johann Christian Richter (1689–1744), who accompanied his prince to Venice in that year.⁴⁵ The only one of Vivaldi's chamber pieces with an authentic dedication is the sonata for oboe, violin, obbligato organ and *ad lib.* salmoè (rv779): the name 'Pelegrina dall'Oboè' appears on the oboe part.⁴⁶ This suggests a dating around 1710. There is, unfortunately, no evidence as to whom all the other pieces were dedicated. However, a common conjecture is that at least the earlier ones were meant to be performed at the Pietà, and therefore by the girls, as was customary for most of Vivaldi's instrumental music.

The most idiomatic writing for oboe among Venetian composers seems to be that of Giovanni Benedetto Platti, who was himself a virtuoso on the instrument. Although nothing is known about his activity in his native city of Venice before he moved to Würzburg in 1722, there are elements in his compositions that show affinities with those by Vivaldi: the use of the oboe in their respective C minor solo sonatas, which

share the same tonality and form, and are similar in their rhythmic patterns and refined harmony. As Platti was still in Venice in 1716—the presumed date of the Vivaldi sonata—the influence of the latter composition seems very likely. Moreover, in his *Stabat Mater* Platti uses the oboe *con sordino*; Vivaldi was one of the few composers who had used this effect.⁴⁷

This first generation of music with obbligato oboe already seemed to require a remarkable mastery of the instrument, and served as model for the form in the late Baroque period all over Europe. The oboe parts of Albinoni's op.7 and Vivaldi's op.7 are not particularly complex or chromatic and the strings are not simply an accompaniment to the oboe, but have a prominent role. These have therefore been considered more as concertos *with* oboe rather than *for* oboe.⁴⁸ In all the other compositions by Vivaldi and others, the contrasts of character between brilliant allegros and gentle largos, as well as dialogues with trumpets or recorders, require the oboist to have extreme expressive capacities, beside a remarkable technical ability.

Vivaldi, a violin virtuoso, has often been considered to have paid little attention to idiomatic writing for the solo instrument in his oboe concertos. However, some evidence proves that his treatment of the oboe was carefully planned. His concertos are certainly very difficult on the old two-keyed oboe, but always possible and entirely playable, as recent performances by specialists on that instrument have proved.⁴⁹ Compositions written by an oboist such as Platti are no less exacting, and show furthermore what a high standard of oboe playing had been achieved in Venice at that time.

Their pieces for the oboe include the complete chromatic scale from *c'* to *d'''*, but avoiding *ca'*, a note that the instrument was unable to play at that time without resorting to mysterious tricks. Tonality preferences do not exceed two sharps or flats, although modulations often introduce more accidentals. A peculiarity of most Venetian solo oboe parts of the first half of the century is the frequent use of the high register, up to the top note, *d'''*. This is especially evident in Albinoni's op.9, but also in several of Vivaldi's concertos and the music of Platti. It is also noticeable that, while Platti constantly uses the entire range of the instrument, Albinoni and many of Vivaldi's works seem to avoid the low register. One may assume, therefore, that these pieces could have been written for an instrument that was a semitone or a tone above the rest of the orchestra, and that therefore

transposed its part down that far, making it more comfortable.

The question of transposition in Venice is often raised, as the organ of San Marco was apparently a tone higher than those in the other churches of the city; there were therefore different standards in force.⁵⁰ There is evidence that oboes had to transpose in Rome before 1720 as the instruments were pitched a tone above the rest of the orchestra.⁵¹ However, no evidence (such as instrumental parts of the same concerto being written in different keys) is available to support the hypothesis that Venetian oboe parts were transposed. In fact Albinoni's choice of tonalities argues against the hypothesis: these pieces, if transposed in the way set out above, would become far less comfortable for the solo instrument.⁵² It is simpler to believe that the combination of reed and oboe in use was especially advantageous for the high register at the expense of the low one: this is supported by the very narrow bore of early oboes by makers such as Johann Christoph Denner.⁵³

This use of the high register was rather unusual in comparison with that of the rest of Europe: German and English compositions for the oboe (for example, sonatas, concertos and arias by Telemann, Handel and Bach) rarely make use of notes above *b''* in their solo parts.⁵⁴ This peculiar writing, in addition to the very high pitch, must have given the sound of the Venetian oboe a rather original character, which was presumably more brilliant and penetrating than that of its relations in the rest of Europe.

Antonio Lotti's music with obbligato oboe has the peculiarity of employing the oboe *d'amore*. As this was an instrument used only in Germany at that time, and Lotti stayed in Dresden from 1717 to 1719, one can assume that his compositions of this kind date from this period.⁵⁵ If that is so, he was among the earliest composers to use the oboe *d'amore* at all: only a few pieces of that period by Christoph Graupner and Georg Philipp Telemann are known today, and the date given by Walther for the creation of the instrument is 1720.⁵⁶

It appears that no relevant pieces for the oboe composed in Venice during the preclassical or classical eras are left today. It is difficult to judge whether this sudden dearth of music for the instrument is to be attributed to lack of interest on the part of composers—perhaps because there were no new virtuosi—or to the loss of original material.

Nevertheless, music with prominent oboe parts

survives from Padua, where the celebrated Matteo Bissoli operated from 1736 to 1780. Beside all the charming (and unjustly neglected) arias by Padre Vallotti,⁵⁷ it is surely worth mentioning the sonata by Bissoli himself. This work is not only impressive on account of the difficulty of the oboe part, but also historically interesting as it is probably the earliest to include the note *f*'''.⁵⁸ One might believe, therefore, that the development of the classical oboe—that is, the narrow-bore, two-keyed instrument—happened in Italy earlier than elsewhere. Oboes by Italian makers such as Carlo Palanca, Giovanni Panormo and Grassi may be cited as evidence of this.⁵⁹

Differences between styles of writing for the oboe became less marked later in the century. As there were many occasions then for all famous performers to travel throughout Europe the tendency towards standardization on such issues as pitch, oboe making, technique etc. was increasingly pronounced, though still very far from what we are accustomed to in modern times.

Exemplary pieces for their period are the oboe concertos of Giuseppe Ferlendis (of whom more below).⁶⁰

Oboe virtuosi

This section will deal with the most prominent oboists who worked in the Venetian Republic, according to the surviving documentation. Players who have been excluded are:

1. Those who came to Venice for a short stay only: for example, Johann Christian Richter from Dresden (see above); Giuseppe Sammartini (1695–1750) from Milan;⁶¹ the Plà brothers from Spain;⁶² and Sante Aguilar from Naples or Bologna.⁶³
2. Venetians who spent most of their lives abroad, and about whose activity in their native town nothing is known: for example Giovanni Benedetto Platti (1697–1763),⁶⁴ who moved in 1722 to Würzburg; and Giovanni Battista Ferrandini (c.1710–1791),⁶⁵ who was in Munich from 1722.
3. Those about whom there is virtually no documentation: for example a certain Gioseppe who performed in Rome in 1751, as reported under a caricature by Pier Leone Ghezzi (see illus.2).⁶⁶

Onofrio Penati (fl.1698–1748) is the earliest player mentioned in documents. He became the only permanent oboist of the chapel of San Marco from 19 January 1698.⁶⁷ His initial salary of 40 ducats was

raised on 5 February 1702 to 55 ducats, making him the highest-paid member of the orchestra (the average salary of the other members of the orchestra was about 20 ducats).⁶⁸ Penati was the oboe teacher at the Ospedale della Pietà from 28 May 1716 to 1720.⁶⁹ He had in fact been a teacher at the Pietà earlier than this (from May 1704 to February 1706, with a salary of 5 ducats monthly) but which instrument he taught then is not specified: this might have been the recorder, as Ignazio Rion was teaching the oboe at that time.⁷⁰ The Pietà entrusted Penati with the purchase of two oboes (2 August 1705) and a barter of four recorders made with Erdmann (26 February 1706).⁷¹ Beside his activity in Venice, there is some evidence about Penati's playing elsewhere: he is listed in an occasional orchestra that performed music by Antonio Caldara in Novara in 1711.⁷² He was the first of a group of four oboists there: the others being Alexis Saint-Martin ('Francese'), his son Giuseppe Sammartini and Giuseppe Appiano ('Milanesi'). Penati was also invited to perform in Padua at the major feasts of the chapel of San Antonio from 1705 to 1721.⁷³ He held his place in San Marco until 3 March 1748⁷⁴ and died in 1753 or shortly before.⁷⁵

Ignazio Rion (fl.1704–1722) does not appear to have resided in Venice for very long. However, his important role in introducing the oboe to several parts of Italy, and a general neglect on the part of historians, call for a short biography here.

He was probably related to a certain Luigi Rion, oboist of a military band in Turin, the 'reggimento delle guardie di S.A.R.', in 1677.⁷⁶ It is very probable that Luigi Rion was a Frenchman, like all his fellow oboists in the band. In March 1704, Ignazio Rion became oboe teacher of the Pietà in Venice and held this place until some time in 1705.⁷⁷ The abbot Vincenzo Maria Coronelli wrote in 1706 that among the best performers on the oboe in Venice were 'Ignazio e Onofrio': it is probable that he was referring to Rion and Penati.⁷⁸ Since in 1700 he had mentioned only Onofrio, it appears that Rion was not living in Venice at that time.⁷⁹ Rion went to Rome in 1705 and took part in all major musical activities organized there by aristocratic families such as the Ruspolis and the Pamphilis and by such religious congregations as St Louis des Français and San Giacomo degli Spagnoli.⁸⁰ On these occasions he performed, together with the composers, music by Antonio Caldara and Handel, whose Roman compositions include many virtuosic solos for the oboe.⁸¹ Rion's salary in Rome was always

much higher than that of the rest of the orchestra, and often equal to that of the first violin. It is surprising that Corelli, who towards the end of his life performed as a violinist several times with Rion in Rome, did not compose a single piece involving oboes. Claiming to have based his account of notes made by 'a very intelligent friend' from a conversation held with Geminiani some five or six years before the latter's death, Charles Burney wrote:⁸²

It was soon after this [Corelli's return from Naples] that a hautbois player, whose name Geminiani could not recollect, acquired such applause at Rome that Corelli, disgusted, would never play again in public.

If any regard should be paid to this anecdote, it seems very likely that the oboist in question was Ignazio Rion.

After Rion had left Rome, around 1713, the oboe ceased to enjoy approval in that city, and its involvement in many musical enterprises diminished. The last records of Rion's activities are in Naples, where he performed for the feast of San Gennaro in 1721,⁸³ and as 'oboè e flauto' of the royal chapel in 1722.⁸⁴

Ludwig Erdmann (Ludovico, Lodovico, Luigi; Erdmann, Ertmann, Ortoman, etc.) (fl. 1706–1730). In the first years of the 18th century, an Erdmann from Berlin was oboist at the Margrave of Brandenburg's court in Ansbach, which had a flourishing musical exchange with Italy.⁸⁵ Ludwig Erdmann was appointed oboe teacher at the Pietà on 20 March 1707. At the beginning of 1706 he was already employed there as 'Maestro Professore di Salamuri' (or 'Salamoni', 'Salmo', 'Saltaron'),⁸⁶ an instrument that has been identified as a single reed woodwind. (Vivaldi called for a bass instrument named as a 'salmoe' in several of his compositions.)⁸⁷ After his appointment as oboe teacher the mention of the 'salamuri' disappears.

Erdmann held his place at the Pietà until 1708. He later entered the service of the Prince of Tuscany, probably after a short stay in Bologna.⁸⁸ The prince himself had Erdmann in mind when, in a letter dated 18 June 1709, he requested Giacomo Antonio Perti to compose a motet:⁸⁹

... potrà regolarsi nel modo dell'anno passato, essendoci gli stessi virtuosi, e rimettendomi al suo buon gusto, bastandomi di ricordarla, che ho un Oboè di abilità da potersene valere...

... you can do similarly to last year, the same virtuosi being here, and I rely on your good taste, and I remind you that I have an oboist of such ability to be able to take advantage of it...

In another letter to Perti (dated 30 September 1711) another correspondent from Lucca mentions 'Sig.re Lodovico Ertman oboè di S.A.R. il Gran Principe di Toscana'.⁹⁰ Quantz met Erdmann in Florence in 1725, and wrote:⁹¹

Ludwig Erdmann ein Deutscher, ein nicht schlechter Hoboist, und dabey, gegen seine Landsleute, sehr freundschaftlicher Mann.

Ludwig Erdmann a German, not a bad oboist, and also, unlike the other people of his country, a very friendly man.

The last record of Erdmann is as a 'virtuoso d'oboè' at the theatre at Lucca in 1730.⁹²

Ignazio Siber (fl. 1713–1761) was also a teacher at the Pietà—from 11 June 1713 to 28 May 1716.⁹³ On 17 December 1728 he again became a teacher there, but this time of the transverse flute, and was dismissed on 23 September 1757.⁹⁴ Siber replaced Penati in San Marco on 3 March 1748,⁹⁵ and held this place until 12 March 1760.⁹⁶ Siber appears to be the only oboist recorded in the lists of musicians' societies such as the *arte dei sonadori* and the guild of Saint Cecilia. In the records of the latter it is recorded that Siber became *priore* in 1743, that in 1757 he received a sickness benefit, and in 1761 his funeral expenses were paid.⁹⁷

Matteo Bissoli (Bissoli) (c. 1711–1780) If we can hardly find a prominent oboe virtuoso of the second generation in Venice, the neighbouring town of Padua surely had one in Matteo Bissoli. He was born in Brescia and is recorded as being there for a performance in Santa Maria della Pace in 1731.⁹⁸

On 28 December 1736 Bissoli was appointed permanent oboist at the chapel of San Antonio in Padua. On that occasion it was written about him:⁹⁹

... virtuoso ben noto e di molto merito ... eccellente suonator d'oboè, che rendesse più ornata questa illustre cappella, non meno per il giusto compimento de' Concerti, che per la singolarità del soggetto.

... well-known virtuoso of great worth ... excellent oboe player, who could furthermore embellish this renowned chapel, not only by the proper accomplishment of the concerts, but also by the singularity of his person.

He was elected unanimously with an initial salary of 150 ducats, soon raised to 170 to equal that of the first violin, Giuseppe Tartini.¹⁰⁰ Bissoli was a good friend of Tartini and Padre Francesco Antonio Vallotti, the *maestro di cappella*. Vallotti, in a letter he wrote on 21 August 1751, referred to Tartini, Bissoli and the cellist Antonio Vandini:¹⁰¹

... tre soggetti di questa fatta fanno spiccare tutta l'orchestra.

... three fellows of this kind make the orchestra excel.

Bissoli held his place in Padua until at the age of 68 he died from asthma on 20 February 1780, a month after Vallotti's death.¹⁰²

Only three times—in 1739, 1742 and 1744—did he request permits to perform abroad—that is, in the theatres of Genoa and Vicenza.¹⁰³ But as he was not required all the time at the chapel in Padua, it may be assumed that he might have travelled more, including times when he did not need a permit. He did in fact perform in Bologna under the direction of Padre Martini: this is recorded in a letter Bissoli wrote to Martini on 17 July 1779.¹⁰⁴ In his letter Bissoli complains of his illness and advanced age, and declines a request from Martini for his portrait. Moreover, he refers to the prize given to him for his playing in Bologna, consisting of a holy relic of St Anthony. Made desperate by the theft of this relic, Bissoli begged Martini to provide him with another.

Bissoli was often asked to perform solo concertos.¹⁰⁵ We do not know what pieces these were, whether of his own composition or by other musicians.

Considering his friendship with Bissoli, it is curious to notice that no surviving work by Tartini includes a solo oboe part. However, all arias with obbligato oboe by Padre Vallotti were surely meant to be performed by Bissoli. Bissoli's only surviving piece for oboe has already been referred to with regard to its use of *f*^{'''}.

Besides Padre Martini's request for his portrait to add to his collection of famous musicians we can find more evidence of Bissoli's high reputation during his life. Charles Burney, during his visit to Padua in August 1770, wrote that he was very keen to hear 'the celebrated Metteo Bissoli, ... first oboe in this select band.'¹⁰⁶ Jérôme de Lalande, who visited Padua in 1766, mentions him among the few famous musicians he had heard in Italy.¹⁰⁷ The abbot Vincenzo Rota remembers him in his poem *L'Incendio del Tempio di San Antonio*, written in Padua in 1753:¹⁰⁸

*E allora fu che da pietade mosso
Il gran Matteo, che più che uman diletto
Presta nei cor col suo foruto bosso
Suppli di quell'estatico difetto
Finché dallo stupor ei fu rimosso.*

Domenico Scolari (fl.1763–1802), born in Padua,¹⁰⁹ was not apparently a first-rate oboist, but his story is interesting as he was active in many different places. He was second oboist at the public theatre in Bologna



*Matthaei Bissoli Braccensis
musico. Obocis solo, egregia viri officina pinxit, et sculpsit
Joseph Tirabosco
Palaui.*

3 Matteo Bissoli (c.1711–1780). Print by Giuseppe Tirabosco (photo Pieter Boersma). By kind permission of Han de Vries, Amsterdam.

(the first was Sante Aguilar) for a performance of *Il trionfo di Clelia* by Gluck in the spring of 1763.¹¹⁰ He was appointed to the chapel of San Marco, Venice on 28 February 1766,¹¹¹ and was dismissed in 1770.¹¹² He was in Venice again on 7 July 1776 for a cantata performed at the Ospedali dei Mendicanti.¹¹³ In 1787 Scolari was appointed first oboe of the San Pietro theatre in Trieste, and was replaced there in 1794 by Gerardo Ferlendis (see below).¹¹⁴ The last record of his activities is of his replacing Pietro Ferlendis for two months in 1802 at the chapel of San Antonio in Padua.¹¹⁵ It has not been determined whether he was related to the opera composer Giuseppe Scolari (?1720–1774) and the oboist Giuseppe Scolari (fl.1796–1846).¹¹⁶

Ferlendis family. This was a dynasty of eminent oboists who distinguished themselves during the period about the end of the Venetian Republic, not only throughout that region, but also in many other major European centres. Most existing sources about

members of the Ferlendis family are inconsistent and contradictory. Some new details reported here should help clarify the subject. The reader should refer to the genealogical table (Table 1).

Franco Ferlendis, according to a French dictionary of music of 1810, was a violin and cello player and teacher.¹¹⁷

Pietro Ferlendis, born in Bergamo on 2 September 1748,¹¹⁸ replaced Bissoli as oboist of the San Antonio chapel on 23 May 1780,¹¹⁹ and founded the Padua branch of the family. He held this place continuously for over 40 years.¹²⁰ Beside his main occupation he was often invited to perform in other churches in Padua and elsewhere. Around 1789 he was occasionally first oboe at the theatre of Brescia.¹²¹ In April 1802 he obtained a permit to perform in Trieste at the Teatro Nuovo and was replaced for two months by Scolari.¹²² In 1829 he was *giubilato emerito* (emeritus pensioner) of the chapel.¹²³ It was he, probably, who performed with his brother Giuseppe at the Carignano theatre in Turin on 31 May 1776 and 23 July 1779.¹²⁴ Pietro is often overshadowed by his brother. Writing about Giuseppe, Gerber stated:¹²⁵

Er hat auch einem Virtuose auf der Oboe zum Bruder. Beyde sind es aber auch zugleich auf dem englischen Horne.

He has also an oboe virtuoso as a brother. They are also both the same on the english horn.

Pietro enjoyed a very high salary at the chapel, sometimes even higher than that of the first violin. He died in Padua on 4 April 1836.¹²⁶

Giuseppe Ferlendis, born in Bergamo in 1755, identified himself as a Venetian during a visit to Trieste in 1792.¹²⁷ He was one of the most famous oboists of his time, largely owing to his extensive travels throughout Europe.

In 1776 he went on tour with one of his brothers (probably Pietro) and the mandolinist Signor Zaniboni. They performed in Turin on 31 May,¹²⁸ Florence on 3 August¹²⁹ and Brescia at the beginning of 1777.¹³⁰ On 1 April 1777 Giuseppe joined Archbishop Colloredo's orchestra in Salzburg, where he became close to the Mozarts, as witnessed by the many mentions they make of him in their correspondence, and the dedication to him of Wolfgang Amadeus's oboe concerto (probably K314/285d, later transposed for flute). According to a letter of Leopold Mozart, Giuseppe, 'Prim'hautbois' of the orchestra in Salzburg,

left his place on 2 August 1778, wishing to move to Vienna. Leopold also wrote that Ferlendis had learned much from Carlo Besozzi, who visited Salzburg two months before his departure.¹³¹

The brothers Ferlendis performed again at the Carignano theatre in Turin on 23 July 1779.¹³² By 1780 Giuseppe had settled in Venice, where he was often employed as first oboist of the San Samuele, San Benedetto and La Fenice theatres.¹³³ He was, though, occasionally invited to perform in the neighbouring towns of Bologna (11 June 1781),¹³⁴ Vicenza (1787),¹³⁵ Brescia (1791),¹³⁶ Trieste (September 1792) and Treviso (October 1792).¹³⁷

In 1793 Giuseppe was in London, where in 1795 he performed his own concertos for oboe and english horn during Haydn's last season, along with other famous virtuosi such as the double bass player Dragonetti. In London he was apparently the lover of the famous singer Brigida Banti, with whom he was said to be sold in a 'package deal'. Among the comments on his English performances were: 'astonishing fine command of the instrument, but degenerated into mere foolish trick'; 'Sig.^r performed on both the English horn and the Hautbois, with great feeling and effect.' Haydn himself wrote in a note that Ferlendis was a mediocre player.¹³⁸

After his stay in England Giuseppe went back to Venice, again operating throughout the region (in 1798 he is recorded as being in Verona and Vicenza, in 1799 in Ravenna).¹³⁹

In 1801 he moved to Lisbon with his wife Anna, son Alessandro and daughter Giuseppa (a Giuseppa Ferlendis sang at the San Samuele theatre in Venice in 1797).¹⁴⁰ There he was employed first at the royal chapel and from 1804 to 1810 at the *Real Camera* (royal chamber). His performance during a feast for the 'restoration of Portugal' at Vila Nova de Gaia, near Oporto, on 11 December 1808 is recorded as follows:¹⁴¹

José Ferlendis, Musico que foi da Capella Real, e Italiano de Nacao, ... tocou com igual prazer, que admiracao dos circunstantes, hum excellente solo de trompa Inglesa ...

José Ferlendis, who had been a musician of the royal chapel, and Italian born, ... performed to the equal pleasure and admiration of those present, an excellent solo for english horn ...

His employment in the royal chamber of Lisbon is recorded until the beginning of 1810, and later in the same year his wife, Anna, is mentioned as a widow.¹⁴² We must assume, therefore, that he died in Lisbon in the middle of 1810, and not in 1802 or 1833 as stated

by some sources without foundation.

A legend claims that Giuseppe Ferlendis was the inventor of the english horn.¹⁴³ This is very unlikely since the instrument was certainly known by mid-century, and before he was born.¹⁴⁴ Many sources consider him to be responsible for improvements to the instrument; some of these state that when he arrived in Salzburg, Giuseppe found an old and imperfect english horn and devoted himself to improving it.¹⁴⁵ But he knew that instrument already before going to Salzburg, as indicated by a review of an *accademia* given with the mandolinist Zaniboni at the Santa Maria theatre in Florence on 3 August 1776:¹⁴⁶

... riportarono il maggior applauso, e particolarmente il corno inglese, che per la sua novità, e dolcezza recò una grata sorpresa ai circostanti.

... they gained a large applause, and especially the english horn, which for its novelty and sweetness was a pleasant surprise for the listeners.

What is certain in any event is that Giuseppe was a specialist on the english horn; it is conceivable that, since the instrument was obsolete at the time, someone hearing him perform on it might believe that he was its inventor. His devotion to this instrument was also acknowledged by composers such as Michael Haydn, who wrote for him a concerto for english horn and string trio,¹⁴⁷ Alessio Prati, who wrote an aria for the castrato Gaspare Pacchiarotti which had an accompaniment of harp and english horn with Giuseppe in mind (1797),¹⁴⁸ and probably also W. A. Mozart, who wrote an adagio for english horn and three unspecified instruments (K580a).

As the brothers Pietro and Giuseppe Ferlendis are mentioned by the maker Andrea Fornari (discussed below) as guarantors of the quality of his instruments, it seems likely that they performed on them, or at least that they appreciated them.

Gerardo Ferlendis, Pietro's son, replaced his father on several occasions over six years. In 1791 he was appointed second oboist of the chapel of San Antonio in Padua, a position that was established with his engagement. During the spring of 1794 he moved to Trieste, where he became first oboe of the San Pietro theatre (later the Teatro Nuovo). He died there on 21 January 1802, aged 31.¹⁴⁹

Faustino Ferlendis, born in Brescia on 10 July 1771, replaced his brother Gerardo in July 1794 as second oboe of the chapel of San Antonio. He followed his brother to Trieste in 1796 and came back to his place

in Padua in 1801. He became a pensioner in 1834 and died on 29 December 1855.¹⁵⁰

Among Faustino's seven children, two probably followed their father's profession: a Girardo is recorded in the archive of Padua as 'orefice e suonatore' (goldsmith and instrumentalist), a Francesco (1802–1836) is recorded as 'Filarmonico'. Towards the end of his life the grandfather Pietro lived with Faustino's daughter Teresa.¹⁵¹

Antonio Ferlendis, Pietro's other son, replaced Faustino in Padua on 30 July 1796.¹⁵² He was in Trieste on 16 August 1800, and went to live there in 1801. In 1810 he was still first oboe of the Teatro Nuovo of Trieste; in 1816 he moved to Venice.¹⁵³ Most sources mistakenly give Antonio as the brother of Giuseppe, probably unaware of the existence of the Padua branch of the family.¹⁵⁴ There is no evidence for this in any original source.

Angelo Ferlendis, Giuseppe's elder son, was born in Brescia in 1780.¹⁵⁵ As early as 1791 he toured with his father in Brescia (16 September), Udine and Trieste (1792), performing on the oboe, the english horn or the flute.¹⁵⁶

Dove la sua eccellente riuscita alla sua più felice e naturale disposizione pe' suddetti strumenti, alle ottime istruzioni ch'ebbe da suo padre ed al suo proprio straordinario talento.

The success of his happy and natural disposition for these instruments was due to the excellent instruction he received from his father, and his own extraordinary talent.¹⁵⁷

Of their performance in Trieste on 10 September 1792 it was reported:¹⁵⁸

L'esito fu di grande soddisfazione: ed il giovanetto concertista, sugli stessi strumenti trattati dal padre, diede prove tali di sé da fargli preconizzare l'eccellenza in arte cui pervenne di poi.

The result was of great satisfaction; and the young performer gave such proof of himself on his father's instrument that one could foresee his excellence in the art that he later attained.

Angelo toured Germany and settled in St. Petersburg in 1801.¹⁵⁹ In October 1823 he was recorded there as being a soloist on the english horn.¹⁶⁰

Alessandro Ferlendis, Giuseppe's younger son, was born in Venice in 1783. In 1801 he went with his father to Lisbon. There he married the contralto singer Camilla Barberi, with whom he toured to Madrid (1803), Italy (1804), Paris (1805), Holland, again Paris (1807–1810) and Italy, Vienna and Frankfurt (1811), Russia and Stockholm (1812–1813), London (1815)

and again Frankfurt (1816). Reviews of his performances were not always enthusiastic.¹⁶¹ According to Choron and Fayolle, Alessandro composed studies and other pieces for the oboe.

Other references to members of the Ferlendis family The presence of so many oboists in the Ferlendis family has made identification difficult in some cases. For example, there is a report of a performance in Milan in October 1816:¹⁶²

Hr. Ferlendis, ein Venetianer, liess sich vor einigen Tagen im grossen Saale des Theaters alla Scala auf der Hoboe hören, und gefiel ganz und gar nicht.

Mr Ferlendis, a Venetian, was heard on the oboe a few days ago at the large hall of the Scala theatre and was not appreciated at all.

And in 1826 there is a report of another performance in Milan:¹⁶³

Eine Sängerin Giovanina Ferlendis gab einmal in Gesellschaft ihres Vaters, Hoboisten in Triester Theater, statt des ersten Akts der Oper eine Accademia Musicale, von der aber Ref., welcher nicht selbst zugegen war, nichts löbliches gehört hat. Der Hoboist soll ein Bruder des verstorbenen Ferlendis seyn, der sich vor mehreren Jahren im im hiesigen Redoutensaal ebenfalls auf der Hoboe (mit ungünstigem Erfolge) hören liess . . .

A singer Giovanina Ferlendis together with her father, oboist of the Trieste theatre, gave an *accademia musicale* instead of the first act of the opera. I was not present, but it was said that nothing praiseworthy was heard. The oboist is said to be the brother of the deceased Ferlendis who performed in this theatre several years ago (with unsuccessful results) . . .

Giovanni Battista Delai (c.1765–after 1805) was the last eminent oboist that the Venetian Republic produced. Born in Verona around 1765,¹⁶⁵ In 1791 he was invited to the Carignano theatre in Turin to perform a concerto for oboe.¹⁶⁶ In Venice he took part in occasional performances such as a *festa da ballo* for the guild of St Cecilia on 22 January 1790, playing next to the first oboist, 'Fierlandis' (that is, Giuseppe Ferlendis).¹⁶⁷ Delai was mentioned by the maker Andrea Fornari (see below) as guarantor of the quality of his instruments. Delai appears to have worked in Venice well into the 19th century; Francesco Caffi wrote in 1855:¹⁶⁸

Non pochi devono ricordar oggidì . . . quanto soavemente suonasse Gianella il flauto, Delai l'oboe.

Many should remember today . . . how gently Gianella performed on the flute and Delai on the oboe.

Caffi also described him as one of the most distinguished members of the orchestra of the chapel.¹⁶⁹

The instrument

No evidence survives of any woodwind makers in Venice at the beginning of the 18th century. This seems rather surprising, considering the picture that has just been painted of the intense activity of these instruments in the city. However, too little organological research has been done to be certain that there really was no maker in Venice.¹⁷⁰ Some evidence supports the conjecture that German woodwinds were in use in Venice at the beginning of the century: some of the earliest oboists were German (Ludwig Erdmann and possibly Ignazio Siber); and all the instruments for which Vivaldi composed, including the clarinet, which, as has already been noted, is not a typically French instrument, were made a little earlier by Johann Christoph Denner at Nuremberg.

Nevertheless, the geographer abbot Vincenzo Coronelli (1650–1718) gives the only specific indication on the subject, when he wrote in 1706:¹⁷¹

Per provedersi des Obois, e d'altri stromenti da fiato, non bisogna partirsi da Milano.

To provide oboes, and other woodwind instruments, it is necessary to find them in Milan.

In Milan, in fact, lived the only Italian woodwind maker that we know of with certainty: Giovanni Maria Anciuti. His mark on recorders, oboes, double recorders, a bass transverse flute and a double bassoon often includes the place of manufacture—in all cases Milan—and a date—between 1709 and 1740.¹⁷² It is not possible to tell if Anciuti was the maker referred to by Coronelli. It may be of some significance that many of his instruments in existence today are marked with the lion of St Mark, the symbol of the city of Venice. The similarity of pitch between Milan and Venice at that time should have made the exchange of woodwind instruments easier.

By mid-century several woodwind makers flourished in Italy, among them Carlo Palanca (c.1688–1783) of Turin, Giovanni Panormo of Naples, Grassi of Milan and I. Biglioni of Rome. It was only towards the end of the century that two woodwind makers distinguished themselves in Venice—Andrea Fornari and Pellegrino De'Azzi.¹⁷³

Andrea Fornari (1753–1841) is the earliest Venetian oboe maker that we know of for certain.¹⁷⁴ Most of his surviving instruments are dated between 1791 and 1832. Fornari's woodwind making, beside being the most accurate seen in Italy up to that time, is characteristic in several respects: he specialized in

oboes and english horns, which is not common for the period; he used ivory for the keys, which had a distinctive shape; most of his instruments are dated; he continued to make the traditional two-keyed instrument at a time when most other makers had applied more advanced systems; his earliest instruments are more original and rich than his later ones, which make less use of ivory and are more traditional.

A typically original feature of his earliest instruments is the lack of an 'onion', that common turning-work of the upper joint. A similar kind of oboe is shown in pictorial sources of a generation earlier (portraits of Bissoli and Giosepepe): although these pictures are not very accurate one might infer the existence of an earlier Venetian oboe maker who inspired Fornari, and of whose work no specimens have been found.

Although Fornari's style is unique in some respects, in others it shows more affinities with the German instruments such as those by the Grensers than with the Italian ones of a generation earlier: single fourth hole, refinement of turning, ivory for the keys, etc. All specimens of his english horns are curved and covered in dark leather.

In his request for subsidy dated 28 February 1792, Fornari mentions four oboists as guarantors of the quality of his work. These are 'Pietro e Giuseppe fratelli Ferlendis, Gio. Battista Delai and Luigi Vittorio Hughelot'.¹⁷⁵ The first three of these players have already been discussed. Luigi Vittorio Hughelot (or Huzelot) was (as recorded on the back of a manuscript fingering chart for the oboe dating from c.1790) a teacher of nine instruments at the *collegio* of Latisana (between Venice and Trieste). On another paper from the same collection, Hughelot stated that he had been a pupil of Pietro and Giuseppe Ferlendis, Domenico Scolari and Gio. Batta Delai among others.

Pellegrino De'Azzi (c.1772–1835), born in Ferrara, was the founder of a large dynasty of woodwind makers.¹⁷⁶ Although De'Azzi and Fornari lived in the same quarter of the city, very little similarity can be found between their instruments. In contrast to Fornari's work, De'Azzi's only extant english horn is angular, the shape of his oboe is more conventional and so is the shape of its keys. Some of his instruments also made use of more advanced systems of keys.

No traces of woodwind making in other parts of the republic have been found. One of the earliest examples known is that of Ignazio Miraz from Udine,

dating from the beginning of the 19th century.

The impoverishment of the later instruments is symbolic of the disastrous economic decline that followed the fall of the Republic of Venice. This was probably also the reason why so many eminent musicians, among them Giuseppe Ferlendis and his sons, sought their fortune elsewhere. The economic decline signalled the end of a golden age for culture and art; it was a turn of events that saw the conclusion of an important chapter in the history of the oboe.

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¹Benedetto Marcello, *Il teatro alla moda* (Venice, c.1720, Milan, 1956), p.54. Notice that the Italian spelling of the name of the instrument was *oboè* (plural *oboè*) until the beginning of the 20th century, when it became *obo* (plural *oboi*). The earlier spelling came directly from the French *hautbois* (until the 19th century the French diphthong *oi* was pronounced like the Italian *ue* or *oe*). The spelling found in 18th-century documents can be quite fantastic: *obboè oboè, abué, boè, obboè, obbové, obbué, obuè*, etc.

²J. J. Quantz, 'Herrn Johann Joachim Quantzens Lebenslauf von ihm selbst entworfen', in F. W. Marburg, *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik* (Berlin, 1755/R1972), p.228. Quantz asked Hasse to introduce him to Scarlatti.

³J. J. Quantz, *Essai d'une méthode pour apprendre à jouer de la flute traversière avec plusieurs remarques pour servir au bon gout dans la musique* (Berlin, 1752/R Paris, 1975), p.246; English translation Edward R. Reilly, *On Playing the Flute* (London, 1966), p.268.

⁴Bathua Churgin, 'Sammartini, Giuseppe', *New Grove*.

⁵Thiemo Wind, 'Alessandro Besozzi: Porträt eines Virtuosen', *Tibia*, 1 (1986), pp.13–22.

⁶Eleanor Selfridge-Field, *Venetian Instrumental Music from Gabrieli to Vivaldi* (Oxford, 1975), p.40. The Venetian composer Agostino Steffani had included obbligato oboe parts in his operas and cantatas some ten years earlier. However, since these works were composed during his stay in Germany they are not relevant to the present subject.

⁷*Ibid.*, p.19. The Venetian year began on 1 March: all dates derived from archival sources in this study are given in the new style.

⁸*Ibid.*, p.14.

⁹*Ibid.*, appendix.

¹⁰J. Vas, Procuratori di San Marco de Supra, chiesa, terminazioni, busta 19, fasc.77. Transcription in the catalogue of the exhibition *Omaggio a Venezia: i fatti* (Venice, 1986).

¹¹*Ibid.*; also Francesco Caffi, *Storia della musica sacra nella già*

cappella ducale di San Marco a Venezia (Venice, 1855), pp.64–5

¹²Agostinelli was replaced in 1767 by Alvise Rosetti. Charles Burney heard him in Ludwigsburg in 1772: *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces* (London, 1775). Eventually he was in the service of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis in Regensburg for 32 years: Hugo Angerer and Gertraut Haberkamp, *Die Musikhandschriften der Fürst Thurn und Taxis Hofbibliothek* (Munich, 1981), p.xi. There is some ambiguity about Agostinelli's first name: sometimes he appears as Francesco Saverio, at others as Fioravante or Florante. There is evidence to suggest that the names indicate one and the same person ('Fioravante' is probably a nickname).

¹³Roger Corte, 'Gianella, Louis', *New Grove*

¹⁴J. Vas. San Marco, Proc. de Supra, reg. 158. The author is indebted to the late Prof. Denis Arnold for his helpful information given from this source.

¹⁵Gastone Vio, 'Precisazioni sui documenti della Pietà in relazione alle "figlie del coro"', *Vivaldi veneziano europeo*, ed. F. Degradà (Florence, 1980), p.104

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp.105, 109; Selfridge-Field, *op cit.*, p.43

¹⁷Vio, *op cit.*, p.109. Siber's replacement as flute teacher was Carlo Chevalier.

¹⁸Michael Talbot, *Vivaldi* (London, 1978), p.136

¹⁹Marie-Thérèse Bouquet-Boyer, *Vivaldi et le concerto* (Paris, 1985), p.14, quoting Johann Christoph Nemeitz

²⁰Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, *Guida de' forestieri sacro profana per osservare il più ragguardevole nella città di Venezia* (Venice, 1700), p.27; (2/1706), p.20

²¹*Arte e musica all'Ospedaletto: schede d'archivio sull'attività musicale degli ospedali dei Derelitti e dei Mendicanti*, ed. G. Ellero and J. Scarpa (Venice, 1978)

²²Denis Arnold, 'Orchestras in Eighteenth-century Venice', *GSJ*, xix (1966), p.12

²³Taddeo Wiel, *I teatri musicali veneziani del Settecento* (Venice, 1897/R Bologna, 1978), pp.352, 359

²⁴Padua, Archivio antico dell'Arca del Santo [AASP], busta 1078, filza 154, n.57 etc. (courtesy of Padre Leonardo Frasson)

²⁵Padre Leonardo Frasson, 'Francescantonio Vallotti maestro di cappella nella Basilica del Santo', *Il santo*, xx, series ii (1980), p.297

²⁶These were Sig. Baroni (1713–1714), Antonio Semenzato (1715–1719), Domenico de Marchi from Vicenza (1715–1718), Michele Ruzini (or Ruzzini, Rosini) (1718–1719): AASP, buste 1079–81

²⁷Frasson, *op cit.*, p.297

²⁸AASP, Atti e Parti, vv.33–6 (1780–1803)

²⁹Bruno Brizi, 'Vivaldi a Vicenza, una festa barocca del 1713', *Informazioni e studi vivaldiani*, no.7 (1986)

³⁰M. T. R. Bazzani et al, *La musica a Brescia nel Settecento* (Brescia, 1981), p.79

³¹*Ibid.*, p.90

³²*Ibid.*, schede 195, 201

³³Giuseppe Vale, 'La cappella musicale del duomo di Udine', *Note d'archivio*, vii (1930), p.163

³⁴J-Bc, I.17.45

³⁵Thomas E. Warner, *An Annotated Bibliography of Woodwind Instruction Books 1600–1830* (Detroit, 1967), entry 122

³⁶Francesco Caffi, 'Appunti per aggiunte a musica sacra', MS in *I-Vnm*, cod. It. iv–762 (10467), p.8

³⁷Bruce Haynes, *Music for Oboe, 1650–1800: a Bibliography* (Berkeley, California, 1986)

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹Michael Talbot, *Albinoni* (Lottstetten, 1980), pp.135–9

⁴⁰Selfridge-Field, *op cit.*, p.40

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p.183

⁴²Jean Pierre Demoulin, 'A propos de la chronologie des oeuvres de Vivaldi', *Vivaldi veneziano europeo*, pp.28–9

⁴³Haynes, *op cit.*

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵Michael Talbot, *Vivaldi* (London, 1978), pp.131–2. I do not know on what evidence Michael Stegemann bases his claim that the sonata and concerto in F were written for Antonio Besozzi: *Vivaldi* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 1985), p.109

⁴⁶Talbot, *Vivaldi*, p.136

⁴⁷The autograph score of the *Stabat Mater*, for bass, recorder, muted oboe, two muted violas and continuo, together with other autographs of chamber music by Platti, is in the library of Count Schönborn in Wiesentheid, near Würzburg.

⁴⁸Talbot, *Vivaldi*, p.154; Talbot, *Albinoni*, p.137

⁴⁹I do not know on what evidence modern writers often refer to the rough and primitive qualities of the Baroque oboe. We can hardly believe that Vivaldi wrote his concertos with a modern oboe in mind.

⁵⁰Bruce Haynes, 'J. S. Bach's Pitch Standards: the Woodwind Perspective', *Journal of the American Musical Instruments Society*, xi (1985), p.109

⁵¹Quantz, *Essai*, p.247, trans. Reilly, *op cit.*, pp.268–9

On exila une fois à Rome les instruments à vent de l'Eglise. Si c'étoit à cause de la hauteur désagréable du ton dont ils se servoient ou de la manière de les jouer, c'est ce que je ne veux pas discuter. Car quoiqu'alors le ton de Rome fut bas & avantageux pour l'Hautbois, les joueurs avoient des instruments, qui étoient un ton entier plus haut; de sorte qu'ils étoient obligés de transposer & ces instruments haut faisoient contre les autres qui étoient bas, le même effet que s'ils eussent été des Chalembes.

In Rome at one time the wind instruments were banned from the church. Whether the unpleasant high pitch or the manner of playing the instruments was the reason for this, I must leave undecided. For although the Roman pitch was low, and advantageous for the oboe, the oboists then played on instruments that were a whole tone higher, so that they were obliged to transpose. And these high instruments produced an effect like that of German shawms against the others that were tuned low.

This statement is confirmed by the original oboe parts of Handel's Carmelite Vespers, composed in Rome in 1707. These are indeed written a tone lower than the other parts: Watkins Shaw, 'Handel's Vesper Music', *MT* (July 1985), p.392. The reason why high-pitched oboes were used in Rome might be because they were introduced from Venice by Ignazio Rion.

⁵²The keys of Albinoni's op.9 oboe concertos are d, F, C, G, g, C, B \flat , D; if they were transposed a tone lower the oboe would play in e, G, D, A, a, D, C, E.

⁵³An oboe by Denner, owned by the Museo Correr, Venice (no.34) but located at the Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello, is rather high in pitch (only 53.9 cm long), and therefore probably suitable for Venice, has a bore of just 5.3 mm. at the narrowest point. The average size of the narrowest point for other oboes of the period is about 6.0 mm. That of classical oboes is about 4.8 mm.

⁵⁴It is possible, however, to find compositions using the oboe in its uppermost register from other parts of Italy. The six *Senate Da Camera a Oboe Solo col suo Basso* by Domenico Maria Dreyer (MS in F–Pn, Vm7 6489), written before 1727, make frequent use of *d''* as well as *c'*. There is also one *e'''*. Dreyer was from Florence, and from 1731 to 1734 was at the service of the Russian court at St. Petersburg: R. Aloys Mooser, *Annales de la musique et des musiciens en Russie au XVIII^e siècle* (Geneva, 1948), i, p.90.

⁵⁵However, an oboe *d'amore* by J. H. Eichentopf is owned by the Museo Correr, Venice (no.35). It is possible that the instrument has remained in Venice since it was made, though there is no direct evidence to prove it. It does not seem to be pitched higher than any other specimen by the same maker (*a'* = c.415 Hz).

⁵⁶Johann Gottfried Walther, *Musikalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1732)

⁵⁷These are all preserved in Padua, Biblioteca Antoniana.

⁵⁸This sonata by Bissoli is in the library of the Liceo Musicale Nicolò Paganini, Genoa, and is published by Nova Music (London, 1983) and Suvini Zerboni (Milan, 1983).

⁵⁹Alfredo Bernardini, 'Carlo Palanca e la costruzione di strumenti a fiato a Torino nel Settecento', *Il flauto dolce*, xlii (October 1985), pp.22-6

⁶⁰Haynes, *op cit.* p.131

⁶¹Quantz met Sammartini in Venice in 1726, as he wrote in his 'Lebenslauf', p.232:

Von instrumentisten fand ich ausser dem Vivaldi und Madonis, Violinisten, und dem Hoboisten San Martino aus Mailand, eben nicht viel besonders in Venedig.

Among the instrumentalists, I did not find anybody special in Venice, excepting Vivaldi and Madonis, violinists, and the oboist San Martino from Milan.

⁶²A letter of Giuseppe Tartini to Padre Martini of 7 May 1762 (*I-Bc*, I.17.74) proves that the Plà brothers (José, Juan Batista or Manuel) were in Padua.

⁶³Aguilar wrote to Padre Martini from Venice on 17 March 1764 (*I-Bc*, I.8.193).

⁶⁴Eva Badura-Skoda, 'Platti, Giovanni Benedetto', *New Grove*

⁶⁵Robert Münster, 'Ferrandini, Giovanni Battista', *New Grove*

⁶⁶Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale dei Disegni e delle Stampe, vol.2606, F.N. 4659

⁶⁷Selfridge-Field, *op cit.* p.19

⁶⁸*Ibid.* p.305

⁶⁹Vio, *op cit.* p.109

⁷⁰*Ibid.* p.105

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²Ursula Kirkendale, *Antonio Caldara* (Graz and Cologne, 1966), p.62

⁷³See note 24.

⁷⁴Selfridge-Field, *op cit.* p.305

⁷⁵1753 is the date of his widow's inventory of goods: *I-Vas*, giudici di Petizion, busta 477/142, n.1.

⁷⁶Marie-Thérèse Bouquet, *Musique et musiciens à Turin de 1648 à 1775* (Turin and Paris, 1969), p.25

⁷⁷Vio, *op cit.* p.105

⁷⁸Coronelli, *op cit.* (2/1706), p.20

⁷⁹*Ibid.* i, p.28

⁸⁰As the documentation on Roman instrumentalists almost always mentions only their first names, an identification of the 'Ignatio' engaged in all the main Roman activities is made very difficult, especially since there were at least six 18th-century Italian oboists named Ignazio (Rion, Siber, Prover, Ciceri, D'Alberto and Maneschi). At first it appeared that the Roman Ignatio was Siber, since six sonatas for recorder and continuo by a certain 'Monsieur Sieber demeurant à Rome' were published in about 1717 by Roger and Walsh (*GB-Lbm*, Hirsch III.211). Eventually the identification problem was solved by the discovery of a bill of payment dated 7 May 1713 for performing at San Ildefonso, and signed 'Ignazio Rion': Rome, Archivio di San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, contabilità 1713, C-III-259.

⁸¹Kirkendale, *op cit.* p.355; Ursula Kirkendale, 'The Ruspoli Documents on Handel', *JAMS*, xx (1967), p.257. Ignatio was first of the four oboes employed for Handel's oratorio *La resurrezione* (14 April 1708). More on Ignatio's activities in Rome can be found in Hans Joachim Marx, 'Die Giustificazioni della casa Pamphili als musikgeschichtliches Quelle', *Studi musicali*, xii (1983), p.171; Jean Lionnet, 'La musique à Saint-Louis des Français de Rome au XVIIème siècle', *Note d'archivio*, iv (1986), supplement, pp.195, 198-200, 203; F. Piperno, 'Anfione in Campidoglio', *Nuovissimi studi corelliani* (Florence, 1982), p.205.

⁸²Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, iii (London, 1789), pp.553-4

⁸³Salvatore Di Giacomo, *Maestri di Cappella, musicisti e istrumenti al*

tesoro di San Gennaro nei secoli XVII e XVIII (Naples, 1720)

⁸⁴Ulisse Prota Giurleo, *Il teatro di corte nel Palazzo Reale di Napoli* (Naples, 1952), p.92

⁸⁵G. Schmidt, *Die Musik am Hofe der Markgrafen von Brandenburg-Ansbach*, Kassel 1956, p.74

⁸⁶Vio, *op cit.* pp.105-106

⁸⁷Michael Talbot, 'Vivaldi e lo chalumeau', *Rivista italiana di musicologia*, xv (1980), pp.155-81

⁸⁸Anne Schnoebelen, 'Performance Practice at San Petronio in the Baroque', *Acta musicologica*, xli (1969), p.52

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

⁹⁰*Ibid.*

⁹¹Quantz, 'Lebenslauf', p.231

⁹²Luigi Nericci, *Storia della musica in Lucca* (Bologna, 1879/R1969), p.339

⁹³Vio, *op cit.* p.109

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵Selfridge-Field, *op cit.* p.308

⁹⁶*I-Vas*, San Marco, Proc. de Supra, Chiesa, busta 19, fasc.72, transcribed in *Omaggio a Venezia: i fiati*. Siber was apparently unable to play after 1757 because of his illness.

⁹⁷*I-Vas*, Scuole piccole, reg.273

⁹⁸See note 31

⁹⁹Frasson, *op cit.* p.297

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹*Ibid.* p.142

¹⁰²AASP, Atti e Parti, vol.33, cc216v, 217rv, 221r

¹⁰³AASP (following Frasson)

¹⁰⁴Located in *I-Bc* (I.18.65)

¹⁰⁵Frasson, *op cit.* pp.132, 138, 142, 143

¹⁰⁶Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London, 1773/R1959), p.103

¹⁰⁷Jérôme de Lalande, *Voyage en Italie* (Paris, 1789), ix, p.12

¹⁰⁸P. Guerrini, 'Per la storia della musica a Brescia', *Note d'Archivio*, xi (1934), p.11

¹⁰⁹Following Frasson

¹¹⁰Corrado Ricci, *I teatri di Bologna nei secoli XVII e XVIII, storia aneddotica* (Bologna, 1888), p.614

¹¹¹Caffi, *Storia della musica*, p.64

¹¹²*I-Vas*, San Marco, Proc. de Supra, reg.156

¹¹³*I-Vas*, Savio Casciere, busta 585

¹¹⁴Carlo Leone Curiel, *Il teatro San Pietro a Trieste, 1690-1801* (Milan, 1937), pp.191, 197, 200, 206 etc.

¹¹⁵Following Frasson

¹¹⁶The former was born in Vicenza, operated in Venice and later in Barcelona and Lisbon (where he died); Piero Weiss, 'Scolari, Giuseppe', *New Grove*. The latter replaced Faustino Ferlendis in Padua in 1834, and was second oboe of the chapel until his death: *Almanacco diocesano di Padova* (1829-1847).

¹¹⁷A. Choron and F. Fayolle, *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens* (Paris, 1810), i, p.222. The first name, Franco, is given in a document concerning Pietro's family: Archivio di Stato di Padova [ASP], reg.76, San Nicolò, 272, 2 (I am indebted to Raffaella Tursini, for all information kindly supplied from this archive.)

¹¹⁸ASP, as preceding note

¹¹⁹AASP, Atti e Parti, vol.33 (1780)

¹²⁰AASP, following Frasson

¹²¹Barezzani et al. *op cit.* scheda 195

¹²²AASP, Atti e Parti, vol.36

¹²³AASP, following Frasson

¹²⁴S. Cordero di Pamparato, 'Gaetano Pugnani violinista torinese', *Rivista musicale italiana*, xxvii (1930), p.551

¹²⁵Ernst Ludwig Gerber, 'Ferlendis, Giuseppe', *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* (Leipzig, 1812-1814/R1966)

¹²⁶ASP, following Tursini

¹²⁷Curiel, *op cit.* p.270, n.115.

¹²⁸G. M. Gatti and A. Basso, *La musica: dizionario* (Turin, 1968-

1971), i, p.664

¹³¹*Mozart Briefe und Aufzeichnungen*, ii (Kassel, 1962), pp.282, 431, 435

¹³²Cordero di Pamparato, *op cit*, p.551

¹³³Wiel, *op cit*. The appointment of Giuseppe Ferlendis as first oboe of La Fenice (built in 1792) is recorded in an autograph composition by him in *I-Gli*.

¹³⁴Ricci, *op cit*, p.501

¹³⁵Gerber, *op cit*

¹³⁶Carlo Gervasoni, *Nuova teoria di musica* (Parma, 1812), p.136

¹³⁷Curiel, *op cit*, pp.257, 270

¹³⁸H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn in England, 1791-1795* (London, 1976), pp.278, 307, 311

¹³⁹*La musica*

¹⁴⁰Carl Israel Ruders, *Viagem em Portugal 1798-1802* (Lisbon, 1981), p.210

¹⁴¹Statement by João António Monteiro e Azevedo reported by Mario de Sampaio Ribeiro, *A música em Portugal nos séculos XVIII e XIX* (Lisbon, 1938), p.127

¹⁴²Joseph Scherpereel, *A orquesta e os instrumentistas da Real Câmara de Lisboa de 1764 a 1834* (text in Portuguese and French) (Lisbon, 1985), pp.181, 254-5

¹⁴³The earliest source to put this forward is Pietro Lichtenthal, *Dizionario e bibliografia della musica* (Milan 1826/R Bologna, 1970), ii, p.72

¹⁴⁴Reine Dahlqvist, 'Taille, Oboe da Caccia and Corno Inglese', *GSJ*, xxvi (1973)

¹⁴⁵Choron and Fayolle, *op cit*, p.223; François Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens* (Paris, 1864), iii, p.207

¹⁴⁶Curiel, *op cit*, p.270, quoting the *Gazzetta toscana* (10 August 1776), p.125

¹⁴⁷John Warrack, 'Ferlandis, Giuseppe', *New Grove*

¹⁴⁸Giuseppe Barblan, 'Giuseppe Ferlendis virtuoso bergamasco e il suo concerto per oboe in fa maggiore' *Chigiana*, xix (1962), p.267

¹⁴⁹AASP, *Atti e Parti*, vols.33-6 (1780-1803); Curiel, *op cit*, p.394

¹⁵⁰AASP, *supra*; ASP, reg.61, San Benedetto 173, 2, reg.36, Carmine 365 (there are small discrepancies between these two registers)

¹⁵¹ASP, *supra*, also reg.40, Duomo 524, reg.76, S. Nicolò 272, 2

¹⁵²AASP, *supra*

¹⁵³Curiel, *op cit*, p.257

¹⁵⁴See, for example, *MGG* supplement and *New Grove*.

¹⁵⁵Gervasoni, *op cit*, p.136. Other sources give 1781 as his date of birth, which appears very unlikely.

¹⁵⁶*Ibid*; Curiel, *op cit*, p.257

¹⁵⁷Gervasoni, *op cit*, p.136

¹⁵⁸Curiel, *op cit*, p.257

¹⁵⁹Fétis, *op cit*

¹⁶⁰*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, xxv (October 1823), p.655

¹⁶¹Choron and Fayolle, *op cit*; Gervasoni, *op cit*; Fétis, *op cit*; Robert Eitner, *Biographisch-bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon* (Leipzig, 1891), *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, xiii (1811), pp.146, 796; xiv (1812), p.867; xv (1813), p.98; xviii (1816), p.716

¹⁶²*Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, xviii (October 1816), p.747

¹⁶³*Ibid*, xxxix (1826), p.635

¹⁶⁴Archivio Municipale Venezia, registro anagrafi 1805, De, p.170v: 'Delai Gio Batta, fu Giulio, età 40, Religione Cattolica, Patria Verona, Sestiere S. Marco, Contrada San Moisè, Calle Ortolani n.1816, Nubile, Civile, Professor d'Oboè.'

¹⁶⁵*I-Vas*, San Marco, Proc. de Supra, reg.158

¹⁶⁶Cordero di Pamparato, *op cit*, p.70

¹⁶⁷*I-Vas*, Scuole Piccole, reg.273 (1791)

¹⁶⁸Caffi, *Storia della musica*, p.70

¹⁶⁹*Ibid*, p.69

¹⁷⁰It is not yet known where such makers as N. Castel (whose name could indicate that he came from southern France or northern Italy) and D. Perosa lived.

¹⁷¹Coronelli, *op cit* (2/1706), p.21

¹⁷²Lindsay G. Langwill, *An Index of Musical Wind Instrument Makers* (Edinburgh, 5/1977); Phillip T. Young, *Twenty-five Hundred Historical Woodwind Instruments* (New York, 1982)

¹⁷³Langwill, *op cit*; Bernardini, *op cit*

¹⁷⁴Alfredo Bernardini, 'Andrea Fornari (1753-1841) fabbricatore di strumenti a Venezia', *Il flauto dolce*, nos.14-15 (April-October 1986), pp.31-6

¹⁷⁵Stefano Toffolo, 'La costruzione degli strumenti musicali a Venezia dal XVI al XIX secolo', *Il flauto dolce*, nos.14-15 (1986), pp.24-30

¹⁷⁶Bernardini, 'Andrea Fornari'

Table 1. The Ferlendis family

All oboists appear in bold type; other musicians in italic.

